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U.S. Agents, Sent to Iran for Raid, Have All Departed, Military Says

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WASHINGTON, April 29 — American military officials said today that all the paramilitary agents infiltrated into Teheran for the rescue of American hostages had quietly slipped out of Iran the same way they entered early this year, posing as European businessmen.

The agents, whose number is unknown, included Special Forces troops, officials said.

Carter Administration officials also disclosed today that President Carter received a long briefing from the rescue mission's commanders at the White House on Saturday. On Sunday, the officials said, he flew to an undisclosed location to meet about 150 members of the rescue team.

The total rescue force numbered about 180. Half were commandos who would have assaulted the embassy; the others included aircraft crews, communications officers and other support forces.

The Special Forces troops who were infiltrated into Teheran were reported to belong to a unit in Europe containing people who speak European languages. They were reported to have bought a warehouse in Teheran that was to have served as a final staging area for the assault on the embassy.

Meanwhile, Gen. David C. Jones, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown called in reporters this afternoon in an effort to counter rumors and speculation flooding Washington about the rescue operation last week.

One rumor has held that the rescue mission was forced upon a reluctant Pentagon. General Jones said, "We want to be on the record that the Joint Chiefs of Staff take responsibility for the plan and the exercising and its implementation."

"Good Chance of Success"

He said that after much thought, all five of the Joint Chiefs, the nation's senior military council, concluded that the operation had "a good chance of success" and recommended to President Carter that "we go on April 24." Secretary Brown agreed and the President decided to do so.

Another rumor was that the military wanted a much larger operation but was forced by a timid White House to scale it back. General Jones and Mr. Brown said the military commanders had everything they needed. General Jones said, "We were not denied anything by anybody."

A third item of speculation has held that the commander on the ground, unofficially reported to have been Col. Charlie Beckwith, wanted to continue the operation despite the loss of three of the eight helicopters inside Iran. General Jones and Mr. Brown said that everyone from the mission commander to President Carter concurred in the recommendation from the ground commander to withdraw.

The secret meeting between President Carter and members of the rescue mission on Sunday was disclosed by the Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts.

According to Mr. O'Neill's account of the meeting, which was based on a conversation with Mr. Carter, the President was impressed with the patriotism of the team. Mr. Carter told Mr. O'Neill that the servicemen stressed that they were honored to have participated in the mission and would be grateful to try again. Mr. Carter said that tears welled up in his eyes.

Iranian Plane Is Intercepted

In another development, Pentagon officials said that two Navy F-14 Tomahawk fighters intercepted an Iranian C-130 transport headed toward the American fleet in the Arabian Sea today in a "routine intercept." No shots were fired in the incident, which took place in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, and the Iranian plane eventually turned back, the officials said.

In their briefing for reporters, General Jones and Secretary Brown disclosed fur-

ther details about the evolution of the plan to rescue the hostages.

General Jones said that soon after the hostages were seized on Nov. 4, the military started working on rescue plans. The planners came up with "many, many different options," the general said, but none seemed to have "a reasonable chance of success."

Even so, he said, the plans were tried out in exercises in which the forces were permitted all the troops, equipment and transport they wanted. "To my knowledge," said Secretary Brown, "nothing was denied by headquarters."

Turning Point in March

But the problems, General Jones said, appeared to be insurmountable. He did not elaborate, but other officers pointed to the distance from the United States, the lack of staging areas and threats to the lives of the hostages by their captors.

General Jones went on to say, however, that by early March, he and the other Joint Chiefs had "growing confidence" that a rescue operation was "militarily feasible." Part of the reason behind that was a record of successful practice runs in the United States.

Then in early April, he said, the service Chiefs presented the concept and received approval to proceed with the initial movement of forces. When the mission commander said they were ready to go into Iran, the Chiefs recommended to the President that the plan be executed.

Mr. Brown said that articles in The Washington Star and an Israeli newspaper about possible rescue missions had caused some concern, but that intelligence monitoring showed no signs of an alert in Iran.

Mr. Brown also said that the Soviet Union did not know about the operation, that the United States, contrary to a rumor, had not received a hot-line message from Moscow warning against the operation and that the United States told Moscow of the mission when it was over.